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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the use of questions and directives by bilingual children of variable relative proficiency in Spanish and English. Patterns in the use of each question and directive type were examined in relation to language proficiency and context of use. Qualitative characteristics of the questions and directives were analyzed. The subjects were six third-graders attending a bilingual maintenance program in a midwestern city. Children were videotaped and audiotaped through a whole day of school, at home, and playing in the park. Results show that the children used the same types of questions and directives as those used by English monolingual adults and children. Questions and directives occurred more frequently in the language in which the children are more proficient. Some types of questions, such as rhetorical questions, were used only by proficient speakers. Personality factors seemed to affect the number and types of directives used by some children. Other factors such as the context of the interaction, the social situation, and the audience influenced the number and types of these speech acts used. The findings are relevant to the study of language development and language proficiency in bilingual children. (Author/MSE)

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Discourse Characteristics and Speech Patterns Used by Spanish-English Bilingual Children According to Proficiency and Context Variables

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of questions and directives by bilingual children of variable relative proficiency in Spanish and English. Patterns in the use of each question and directive type according to the language proficiency and the context in which they were used are discussed. Qualitative characteristics of the questions and directives are analyzed. The subjects of the study were six third graders (four girls, two boys) attending a bilingual maintenance program in a city in the Midwest. Children were video and audio taped through a whole day of school, at home and playing in a park.

The results of the study show that these children use the same types of questions and directives as those used by English monolingual adults and children, as demonstrated in previous studies. Questions and directives occur more frequently in the language in which the children are more proficient. Some types of questions, such as rhetorical questions, are used only by proficient speakers of a language. Personality factors seem to affect the number and types of directives used by some children. Other factors such as the context of the interaction, the social situation and audience influence the number and type of these speech acts used. These findings are relevant to the study of language development and language proficiency of bilingual children.

Discourse Characteristics and Speech Patterns Used by Spanish-English Bilingual Children According to Proficiency and Context Variables

If one agrees that speech is primarily social behavior, and that it should not be limited to the production of grammatically correct sentences, then one can argue as Hymes does that:

> A child from whom any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language might come with equal likelihood would be of course a social monster. Within the social matrix in which it acquires a system of grammar, a child acquires also a system of its use, regarding persons, places, purposes, other models of communication, etc.—all the components of communicative events, together with attitudes and beliefs regarding them. There also develop patterns of the sequential use of language in conversation, address, standard routines, and the like. In such acquisition resides the child's sociolinguistic competence (or, more broadly, communicative competence), its ability to participate in its society as not only a speaking, but also a communicating member. What children so acquire, an integrated theory of sociolinguistic description must be able to describe. (Hymes, 1974, p. 75)

Communicative Competence involves both a knowledge of well formed grammatical sentences and of their appropriate use. Speakers who have developed sociolinguistic or communicative competence have developed abilities to judge when to speak, when not to, what to talk about, with whom, in what way, when and where. In addition to this, the speakers develop attitutes regarding the languages or varieties they use, and the communicative events.

How can we then describe the ability possessed by the speaker which helps him or her to communicate effectively in different settings and situations? We may attempt to arrive at this description by looking at various components of speech developed by Hymes (1971, 1972, 1974)—setting, participants, topics, and purposes. The setting includes the relevant time and place in which speech occurs: the home, the neighborhood, the school playground, and the classroom. The participants are all those who take part in communicative events—senders, receivers, and audience. Topic is a variable that can be defined as an explicit message on an interaction, which has informational context. Purpose or end is a variable that can be defined as the goals or outcomes of a speech event: to command, insult, win over, convince, request information, put down, etc. The components of speech can be used as a guide to discover and describe speech behavior understood in terms of communicative competence (form and function) and creativity.

To study communicative competence one has to focus not only on form but also on function in language use, in order to find out how children use language to accomplish their goals. This may include, for example, units dealing with requests for information. How is information requested at home? Are requests made to parents similar to those made to siblings? How are questions directed to adults at home? How are questions directed to teachers in school? Are performatives, direct imperatives, statements, indirect questions used? Interpretation will be highly dependent upon the setting, the types of participants, the rights and obligations among the speakers, and the speakers' expectations in regard to the social situation. Are there special linguistic powers used to show appreciation in different situations? How does this vary from the school to the home?

The basic unit for the analysis of the interaction of language and social setting is the communicative event (Hymes, 1974). The components of the communicative events which are involved in this study include: (1) the various kinds of participants and their sociological attributes; (2) the mode of communciation: either verbal or written; (3) the linguistic varieties shared by the participants; (4) the setting: home, neighborhood, classroom; (5) the intent or purpose held by the speakers; (6) the topic and comments; (7) the types of events: e.g., questions, commands, jokes.

Studies done recently (not necessarily dealing with bilingual children) have not only examined language behavior in specific speech situations, but have also changed the unit of analysis from the sentence to speech acts and events. Current research dealing with discourse structure focus on various other systematic levels such as turns of speaking, conversations, moves, utterances, or exchanges (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 1977). All of these studies examine functional diversity in language, and indicate that there is not always a direct correspondence between linguistic functions and structural forms. Questions, for example, are difficult to code because some questions can be interpreted as requests for information, others are imbedded imperatives, while still others are simply rhetorical (Ervin-Tripp, 1977). Thus, the function of an interrogative, declarative or imperative sentence may be served by different forms. There is then a lack of correspondence between form and function because any given speech act can include several grammatical structures, and any given grammatical structure can be used to perform several communicative acts (Coulthard, 1977; Hymes, 1971).

Dore (1977) states that form alone cannot determine pragmatic function, because the hearer's interpretation of the speaker's communicative intent is dependent on various factors that function independently of the grammar. The first step in the formalization of the analysis of the functional use of speech according to Labov is to distinguish "what is being said from what is being done" (Labov, 1972, p. 191). This type of analysis must relate a smaller number of sentences written within a grammatical framework to a much larger set of actions accomplished with words.

The speech acts labeled as directives have been studied among adults and children because they have a high frequency of usage, often lead to action, are easy to identify and are rich in structural variability (Ervin-Tripp, 1976). Speakers, and especially children, demonstrate their communicative competence when they are able to identify directives which have other surface forms, such as an information question or a statement. In these cases, the speaker must have a knowledge of the function of the utterance in order to understand it as a request for action.

Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1977) using Ervin-Tripp's classification scheme have examined aspects of the use of directives among black American children who were 7 to 12 years old. The investigation focused on the social distribution of directive types used by children, and the relationship between particular directives and broader interactional goals. It was found that the children had acquired all of the conventional forms that directives may take in adult American English, that there were no differences in age with regard to the children's ability to use the various types of directives, and that they show an awareness of the social factors involved in the selection of the appropriate directive forms according to the type of social situation.

Functional language competence is defined as the underlying knowledge to make utterances in order to accomplish goals and to understand the utterances of others in terms of their goals (Shuy, 1977). Language proficiency cannot be described accurately unless it is assessed in communicative situations which occur naturally. This is needed in order to cover a wide range of communicative skills. In the case of school children, this should involve the child's level of facility across different speech events—conversations with peers and siblings, formal interactions with teachers, etc., and his/her performance within various speech functions such as requesting and giving information, commanding, persuading, complaining, etc. (Hernández-Chávez, 1978).

With bilingual children, the specification of the context in which each or both languages are used is relevant because to say that children are dominant or more proficient in English or Spanish is insufficient. As Shuy points out, in order to begin to assess language abilities accurately one has to assess comparative language abilities in a broad number of contexts, specifying in detail where, under what circumstances, and to what extent each language is used, as well as the relationships among those contents (Shuy, 1977). Thus, is a bilingual child more dominant or more proficient in English at school? at the neighborhood playground? with her or his siblings? One has to consider, then, not only a quantitative dimension but a qualitative dimension as well. A holistic approach examines language use in specific situations, with different interlocutors and for different purposes. Furthermore, language variability should be seen as an asset rather than as a liability. Traditionally, and especially in educational circles, bilingual

children are considered highly proficient in a language when that language resembles the one used by a monolingual speaker. However, as Lavandera (1978) points out, it is only in bilingually defined settings and situations when the bilingual's total verbal repertoire is fully used. In those settings, the speaker is able to activate all the varieties possessed by him or her, mix them, and thus take advantage of his or her whole range of linguistic competencies.

If one sustains the view that Hispanic bilinguals can better their social meanings to communicate effectively only by using their total linguistic repertoire, then one must take into account the whole linguistic continuum, including code-switching behavior when analyzing their language behavior.

Rationale and Problem

The purpose of this study is to describe aspects of the communicative competence of children who are at different levels of proficiency in English and Spanish by focusing on the use of questions and commands in different settings. The identification of the social variables that influence the types of questions and commands the children use will also be discussed. We intend to see if there are any differences in the types of questions and commands used by children who are more proficient in one or the other language when compared with children who are less proficient in the same language.

As Ervin-Tripp (1977) has stated, certain communicative acts are especially suitable for functional language analysis. Questions, for example, have a high frequency of occurrence, require responses by the addressee and the audience, and are used to communicate a variety of intentions.

Some studies have been done which deal with the questioning strategies used by English monolingual children who were the same age as those included in this study (Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Dore, 1977; Peck, 1978). However, most of the issues raised in those studies dealt with a comparison of children's and adults' discourse patterns.

The speech acts known as directives or requests for action were also chosen as the focus of this investigation rather than other types of speech acts because, like questions, they occur frequently among children, often lead to action, are easy to identify and vary according to the social situation and the setting (Ervin-Tripp, 1977).

Since the range of directives goes from the explicit imperative to questions and hints, the competent speaker of a speech community must be able to identify directives whose form and function differ. Thus, when one of the target children says to one of her peers in an informal interaction "Hay que limpiar" (We or somebody has to clean up), she is not making a statement but hinting to the hearer that something needs to be done. This is a request stated in an indirect manner. The hearer in this case has knowledge of the function of the utterance and thus is able to interpret the declarative sentence as a directive.

In order to demonstrate communicative competence children must then be able to identify and comprehend as directives utterances those which may have other surface forms, and be able to select from a large repertoire those forms that have situational appropriateness.

The types of directives which will be discussed in this study fulfill different semantic functions for speakers as Ervin-Tripp has pointed out:

> Statements allow the listener not to respond verbally at all; interrogatives allow the non-compliant listener to reinterpret the directive as an information questions; imbedded imperatives allow the compliant listener to reply as if he had acted voluntarily. Indirection protects both parties from the embarrassment in explicit non-compliance. (Ervin-Tripp, 1976, p. 51)

By describing the functional use of questions and commands in Spanish-English speaking children's speech, variations related to their relative proficiency in the two languages can be analyzed and discussed. Specifically, the study tries to explore whether the use of questions and commands in these children shows the same patterns as those used by monolingual English speaking children and adults as described by Ervin-Tripp, 1977, Dore, 1977, Mitchell, Kernan, and Kernan, 1977, and Peck, 1978.

Method

Subjects:

The subjects of this study were six Hispanic children attending third grade in a self contained maintenance bilingual program. The children were chosen according to their relative (L1/L2) language proficiency as follows:

Paula: Spanish and English Proficiency

Ana: Proficiency in English—Limited Spanish proficiency

Carmen: Proficiency in English—Non-Spanish proficiency

José: Limited English and Spanish proficiency

Juanita: Limited English Proficiency—Proficiency in Spanish

César: No English Proficiency—Proficient in Spanish

The levels of proficiency used to describe the children's proficiency are the ones described by De Avila (1975) in the Language Assessment Scales (LAS). Students were rated as non-proficient in a language if they were rated as Level 1. They were described as limited in proficiency in a language if they were diagnosed as being Level 2-4 and they were rated as proficient if they were diagnosed as Level 5 in a particular language. The subjects were chosen after assessment information on their relative language proficiency was collected from the following sources: a) administration of the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) in Spanish and English; b) teacher assessment of the children's proficiency; c) parents perception of language proficiency of children; and d) researcher assessment of proficiency levels in Spanish and English, after long observation of the child in the classroom and an informal interview. Children were chosen as subjects for the study when at least three out of four criteria described above rated the child's proficiency at the same level.

Data Collection Procedure

After permission was given by parents for the children to participate in the study, each child was videotaped during an entire school day. The target child wore a lapel microphone during the taping session. A stationary camera (SONY AVC 3250) was used for data collection purposes. The camera was focussed on the target child and the children around him/her. Subsequently, children were videotaped at home playing with other children and at a picnic where all six children interacted. Several audio recorders were used to collect data in areas where the camera was not recording. Field notes were collected discussing classroom activities, etc. during the days the video recording took place.

Data Analysis

A transcription code system was developed to analyze the videotaped data. The information coded included the following:

1. Location in the tape of the interaction or utterances (in the case of solliloquia)
2. Speaker: TC = target child, AC = another child, T = teacher, Exp = experimenter
3. Transcription (only conversations in which the target child was involved were transcribed)
4. Context (information relative to the lesson, activity, etc.)
5. Immediate situation (a brief description of what is happening between people involved in the interaction)
6. Translation to English (if the utterance is in Spanish)

The transcription system was explained to several assistants who transcribed the tapes. The main investigator was available to clarify any ambiguity during the analysis of the videotaped data. Subsequently, a different assistant checked the same tape to assure the reliability and validity of the information. Only when the two raters agreed to the transcriptions, were the data used for further analysis. Unintelligible utterances were dropped from the data set.

A system to code target children interactions was designed, with the same information from the transcripts. An interaction was defined as a series of conversational turns by two or more speakers around a common activity or topic which are temporally related. Questions and directives which appeared in the interactions were classified according to specific taxonomies developed and/or

adapted from previous studies (Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Dore, 1977). Subsequently, questions and directives which appeared in the different categories in the taxonomies were classified by the classroom context in which they occurred (i.e., Math, Reading, etc.).

Findings and Discussion

Characteristics of questions and their use patterns

As explained before, the data discussed here comes from the child-child and child-teacher interactions both inside and outside the classroom which were extracted from transcripts of the videotapes which were made. Interactions were defined as a series of conversational turns by two or more speakers around a common activity of topic, and which are temporarily related.

A total of 682 questions were contained in the total data corpus (home and school contexts). Table 1 lists the types of questions and shows examples. The data were classified independently by two experienced coders to assure inter-rater reliability.

Insert Table 1 here

Tables 2 and 3 list the number and percentages of questions used by the six children in the different settings in English and in Spanish (338 in English and 344 in Spanish).

Insert Table 2 here

Insert Table 3 here

A frequency count of the questions in the data corpus demonstrates that questions occur more often in the language in which the child is more proficient. Although Paula and José were rated as having equal proficiency in both languages (Paula as English and Spanish proficient and José as limited in proficiency in both Spanish and English), they still showed a preference for one language over another when questioning. Paula made 83% of her questions in English while José made 18.7% of his questions in English. Paula's high frequency of English questions may be explained by the fact that she spends most of her time with monolingual English-speaking students. José on the other hand, socializes more with the limited English proficient (LEP) students in the class who speak mostly in Spanish.

An analysis of classroom questioning patterns showed that requests for information had the highest frequency of occurrence in both languages in the classroom (39.1% for English and 47.2% for Spanish). Requests for permission, requests for clarification, and rhetorical questions had a higher incidence of occurrence among children who were more proficient in English than among children who were proficient in Spanish.

After comparing the types of questions asked according to levels of proficiency, it was found that in the formal classroom context, in English as well as in Spanish, children asked more information questions followed by yes/no questions. The third most frequently used type of request in this context was requests for approval (in Spanish), and permission requests (in English).

Data collected in informal settings (at home, playing at the park and at a picnic), shows that as in formal settings requests for information showed the highest frequency of occurrance in both languages (49.2% English, 33.7% Spanish), followed by yes/no questions (25.3% English and 49% Spanish). In informal settings, no hesitation questions were recorded. The types of questions which were used less frequently in informal settings in both languages were requests for approval (1.6% in English and 0% in Spanish) and requests for permission (4.8% in English and 1.2% in Spanish).

As we look at qualitative aspects of the questions coded we find that:

1. Not all utterances were composed of full propositions. Many questions consist of only one word requests for clarification, such as "huh?" which is a recurrent pattern in children with low proficiency. This pattern was observed frequently with Ana whan she tried to have a conversation with one of the researchers in Spanish.
2. Some of the questions were ambiguous. Yes/no questions seemed similar on certain occasions to requests for approval, and requests for information could also have been coded as imbedded imperatives. However, after looking at the context, the real function of the utterance became clear, as in the following example, in which the question is a request for action rather than a request for information:

César: Tienes lápiz grande?
(Do you have a big pencil?) (waits for pencil)
Préstaselo a José.
(Let José use it.)

Arturo: No sabía que eras su amigo tantito.
(I didn't know you were his friend.)

César: Tantico nomás. Préstaselo pa cer el work y más na.
(Just for few minutes. Let him use it to work and nothing else.)

3. Rhetorical questions seem to be a more sophisticated level of language use. The majority of the rhetorical questions in English were used by students who had a high level of proficiency in that language, e.g.,

Paula: These are my pencils.

Mimi: One is mine.

Paula: That's . . . How am I going to erase them?
Mimi, could I have your eraser?

It is obvious from the preceeding example that the addressor does not expect to get an answer to her question (How am I going to erase them?) and thus, continues with the next request for action.

4. An interesting discourse pattern occurs when questions are used to answer other questions when speakers do not want to commit themselves to a definite answer, e.g.,

Teacher: How would you feel about this friend of yours telling your teacher?

Paula: Sad?

Teacher: What would you want to do with that friend?

Paula: Beat him?

These types of answers are particularly noticeable in the speech of José, a very low proficiency speaker in English, when he tries to communicate in that language, e.g.,

Teacher: José, tell me where are these people going to sleep?

José: Here . . . living room?

Teacher: Okay. No . . .in the bedroom.

Teacher: Where did you put your milk?

José: In here.

Teacher: What's that?

José: The refrigerator?

On this situation, the speaker's answering of a question with another question can be interpreted as a need for reassurance.

José's hesitation and insecurity in answering in English was increased by the attitude of the teacher who often ignored his questions and continued to speak without paying attention to him. Furthermore, he did not seem to be accepted by the rest of his classmates who felt that his Spanish discourse relied too heavily on lexical items such as dirty words, which they did not consider appropriate for classroom interactions. They would regularly laugh at him when he made mistakes. This contributed to his feeling of insecurity and to his hesitating questions, as in the following example:

Teacher: But this here is a rug. It's on the . . .

José: Rug? (Everybody laughs; José looks embarrassed.)

Teacher: It's on the floor. The rug is on the floor.

Although Paula also used this pattern in her discourse once in a while, her answers marked by intonation did not produce the same derisive reaction as José's, because Paula was a leader in the class due to her high proficiency in both languages.

From the previous analysis, one can note then that the same types of questions are asked in both languages, although children who are more proficient in English seem to have access to a greater variety of questioning

strategies. In addition, the type of setting or activity will influence the language in which the questions are asked. Consequently, in a bilingual class children have to be given an opportunity to work in different groups so that they are not isolated from acquiring a richer language experience.

Characteristics of directives and their use patterns

Examination of the interactions coded showed a total of 516 directives. Table 4 lists the types of directives formulated. Types of directives were taken from a taxonomy developed by Ervin-Tripp (1976, 1977). The table also includes the codes, definitions, and examples of each type of directive.

Again, as with the questions, the data was classified independently by two coders to assure inter-rater reliability. From this table, it can be noted that the target children have access to the majority of the types of directives which have been observed in other studies (Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan, 1977). Their repertoire does not only include the obvious imperatives or direct commands, but such directives as imbedded imperatives, questions, directives, and hints.

Insert Table 4 here

Table 5 lists the number and percentage of directives per child, and for the total sample by setting and language.

Insert Table 5 here

The most common types of directives found for all children studied in this project were explicit imperatives (74.3% of total use) and imbedded imperatives (18.8% of total use). They were used to express imperative intent. Explicit imperatives are the most obvious kind of directive which normally includes a verb, and, if it is transitive, an object and sometimes a beneficiary; for example:

Wait!, Stop it!, Tráelo! (Bring it!)

There are occasions in which elliptical forms are uttered when the action requested is obvious to the speaker and the hearer, such as in the following utterances:

Cream and sugar (Coffee with cream and sugar) or

Aquí (Ponlo Aqui—put it here).

Imbedded imperatives are directives in which the requested act is preceded by an introductory phrase, as in the following examples:

Would you hand me that?,

Por favor, tráemelo (Please, bring it to me).

Understanding the type of situation and setting is basic here as Ervin-Tripp (1977) points out. If one asks "Can you swim?" while indoors, this will be interpreted as a yes/no question. However, the same question asked by a swimming pool can be interpreted as a request for action.

In examining the use of directives according to levels of proficiency, we find that directives are used in the language in which the child is more proficient. Proficient English speakers, for example, used a total of 93 directives in English in formal settings, whereas limited or non-English proficient children used only six English directives. A similar pattern can

be observed in Spanish in formal settings. Students who were limited or non-Spanish used 13 directives as opposed to 26 used by Spanish proficient. An additional factor which influenced the number of directives used by each child was the type of activity in which he/she was engaged. The number of Spanish directives used by Juanita for example (n = 231) is considerably higher than those used by the rest of the subjects. The interactions at home in which Juanita was involved were predominantly games in which she was the leader (playing house, playing school, etc.), and this accounted for the very high percentage of different types of directives which were used. Furthermore, Juanita has a very strong personality and is accustomed to ordering friends to do things at school as she does with her younger brother and sisters at home.

One hundred and thirty-two directives (26.1% of the total) were used during the classroom interaction in both languages (29.5% in Spanish and 70.5% in English). In English as well as in Spanish, imperatives and imbedded imperatives accounted for the majority of the directives used by the children. The lowest frequency of occurrences were found in both permission directives (2.1%) and question directives (2.5%). Need statements also had a low frequency of occurence in this setting. None were used in Spanish while 13 were used in English.

From the 374 directives produced in informal settings, the same pattern emerged. Imperatives had a frequency of occurrence (77.5% of total use), and imbedded imperatives were used 18.4% of the time. No permission directives were used at all in any of the two languages, and the rest of the directives (need statements, question directives and hints) had a similar low frequency of occurrence in both languages.

A look at qualitative aspects of the directives as coded shows that:

1. The context of the interaction was usually needed to determine better the type of directive for coding purposes. For example the statement

"Oh man, I need a pencil!"

may be coded as a hint, as a personal need statement, or as an imbedded imperative. A review of the context in which the utterance appeared showed that the subject was talking to herself at the moment so it was coded as a personal need statement.

2. Imperatives were always definite statements, as well as part of an interaction where the speaker wanted immediate action, as in the following underlined example:

Paula: (To Mini) See, you were copying me just now. You copied me . . . (pause) <u>You better quit, you copy-catter</u>. That's what I hate about you.

Mini: (To Paula) I'm not copying you.

3. In some situations, a switch from Spanish to English, or vice versa, occured as in the following interaction:

<u>Ana:</u> (To José) <u>Shut up</u>! (Another child repeats a request for paper required to do an activity. Ana does not hear the request). Que? (What?) . . . (pause) Que? (What?) . . . <u>Ah! Callate! Ya sé yo</u> (I know what I have to do). Ten (here, take it).

The code switch made the directive more emphatic. Not only that, but it also made sure the addressee would understand no matter which language he/she knew better.

4. Imbedded imperatives were often introduced through a phrase as if to help clarify the intent of the directive. The following interaction shows an undefined example of such behavior:

Ana: (To Carmen) Give me your orange . . . your orange . . . get it? . . .

Carmen: Don't ask me. Ask Mini . . .

Ana: I asked her already. She said to get it. She told me to get it and I'm asking you if you can get it for me.

5. Hints presented specific underlined purposes.

a) In the following interaction, the hint is really a request for help.

Carmen: (To Ana) You have to do that right?

Ana: I don't know how to do it.

Carmen: I'll do the back for you.

Anna: Don't. Don't.

Carmen: Who did that?

Anna: I don't know . . . It's yours . . .

b) A different type of hint occurred when a question became a very discrete way of asking for something back as in the following interaction:

José: (To teacher aide) Bueno, Miss Nieve, a donde voy? Ya termine este. (Well, Miss Nieve. Where do I go from here? I finished this one.)

Miss Nieve, me presta un lápiz? (Miss Nieve, can I borrow a pencil?)

(To children around him) Quién tiene un borrador mio? (Who has my eraser?)

The implication to the statement "Who has my eraser?," is a call for someone to return the eraser rather than to find out who has it. It was understood that way by the children sitting around the subject.

c) Hints occurred in place of direct requests when something was to be done, as in the following interaction:

Ana: (To Juanita and a group of children) Ella quiere jugar con ustedes. (She wants to play with you).

Juanita: Andale (go ahead).

In this interaction the request was to let a girl play, and not just a statement to let people know someone wanted to play. This type of intention only became clear when the whole interaction and the context in which it occurred were studied.

6. Permission directives usually occurred in interactions where a child was politely negotiating participation in a group or game. Some were direct such as the following one:

Ana: (To Carmen) May I see your word?

Carmen: May I see your word?

Ana: Yeah, sure. Here.

In other situations, a service is offered as a way to enter a game, as in the following example:

Paula: (To César and a group of children) I'll push you guys.

César: Not too hard.

In this case, Paula requested permission to play with the group and immediately became part of the game in a very indirect manner. The children understood the intention of the statement and reacted accordingly.

Generally, children understood the intention of the different types of directives addressed to them. They were able to use the two languages in interactions; sometimes to emphasize the need for a response from the other children around the subject. The use of the two languages in an interaction, especially in those where English speaking children and limited English proficient (LEP) children were interacting, was a sign that the children were aware of the audience they were interacting with. The language used in directives depended on the setting and/or activity. The data showed that more English directives occurred in the classroom while more Spanish directives occurred in informal settings. This may be due to the fact that English was the language emphasized more in the classroom. Spanish was the language most subjects spoke at home or in social situations, and maybe the language they felt more comfortable with in informal settings.

Conclusion

Judging from the types of questions and directives exhibited by the six target children in their informal spontaneous speech and in their formal interactions in the classroom, one can say that they have receptive competence in all of the conventional forms that questions and directives may take in English and Spanish. This includes two functional dimensions: the identification and comprehension of questions and directives, and the selection of the speech acts which are appropriate to the social situation in which they are a part.

In terms of actual production of the wide range of questioning strategies and directive forms, such as the one described for monolingual speakers (Dore, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan, 1977; Peck, 1978), they varied according to the levels of language proficiency students possessed in each language. The data consistently show that students who are proficient in a language ask more questions and use more directives in that language than those who are limited in proficiency in English and/or Spanish. Furthermore, developmental factors besides proficiency may account for the low frequency of occurrence for some complex types of questions and directives, such as rhetorical questions and hints.

There are other factors that influence the number and type of these speech acts used; for example: the context of the interaction, the social situation and the type of audience present during the interaction. In effect, the number and type of questions and directives used depended on the type of activities in which the children were engaged. In the classroom, for example, more questions were asked during language arts and art (59.2% of the total use) than during math and reading (19.5% of the total), which were more structured, teacher-directed activities.

In the case of children who show limited proficiency in both languages (such as José) there may be other extra-linguistic factors that need to be explored to explain the effect of the limited proficiency in both languages. Cummin's (1979) interdependence hypothesis may provide some insights in trying to understand this issue. In trying to understand the speech behavior of bilingual subjects from a sociolinguistic perspective, discourse analysis of children's speech in formal and informal settings should be emphasized in future research.

More studies in the area of children's language use for different purposes and involving different speech acts (negations, questions, etc.) among children at different levels of proficiency, and with larger populations are necessary to improve the state of the art in this area. Furthermore, these types of analyses should be related to the issues of language proficiency and language development in bilingual settings.

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Table 1

Repertoire of Questions and Examples of
Communicative Intentions and Their Meaning

Requests for Information	Solicit information about the identity, location, time, or property of an object, event, or situation; e.g., En cual página vas tú? (Which page are you in?)
Requests for Clarification	Solicit more specific information when the child has failed to understand the referent of the previous utterance; e.g., Which one?
Requests for Approval	To request a judgment or an attitude about events or situations; e.g., Do you think this looks good?
Requests for Action	Solicit the listener to perform, not to perform, or stop to perform an action; e.g., José, préstame esta goma? (Jose, would you lend me your eraser?)
Request for Permission	Solicit permission to perform an action; e.g., Miss Jones, can I finish this?
Yes/No Questions	Solicit affirmation or negation of the propositional content of the addressor's utterance; e.g., Are we leaving now?
Rhetorical Questions	Solicit a listener's acknowledgment to allow speaker to continue; e.g., Did I collect this one? All of them. I'll tell you right now.
Hesitation Questions	Answer a question with another question, showing hesitation and insecurity; e.g., Here . . . living room?

Table 2

Percent of Questions in English Asked by Each Child and all Children in the Classroom and in Informal Settings

Child	Paula	Ana	Carmen	Jóse	Juanita	César	All Children N=6
Proficiency Level	5	5	5	3	1-2	1	
Total number of Questions	54	107	123	50	1	3	338

Percent Use of Each Type of Question per Child and for Total Population in the Classroom

Requests for Information	32.7	37.9	48.1	27.3	100	33.3	39.1
Requests for Clarification	5.8	22.4	13.0	27.3	0	0	14.5
Requests for Permission	0	19.0	14.8	0	0	33.3	11.2
Requests for Approval	1.9	0	7.4	0	0	0	2.8
Yes/No Questions	19.2	15.5	11.1	9.1	0	33.3	15.1
Requests for Action	5.8	3.5	0	0	0	0	2.8
Rhetorical Questions	15.4	1.7	5.6	0	0	0	6.7
Hesitation Questions	19.2	0	0	36.3	0	0	7.8

Percent Use of Each Type of Question per Child and for Total Population in Informal Settings

Requests for Information	57.1	37.5	10	100	75	67	49.2
Requests for Clarification	4.7	18.7	30	0	0	11	12.7
Requests for Permission	9.5	0	0	0	0	11	4.8
Requests for Approval	0	0	0	0	25	0	1.6
Yes/No Questions	28.8	37.5	40	0	0	11	25.3
Requests for Action	4.7	6.2	20	0	0	0	6.3
Rhetorical Questions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hesitation Questions	0	4.1	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3

Percentage of Questions in Spanish Asked by Each Child and Across all Children in the Classroom and in Informal Settings

Child	Paula	Juanita	César	Jóse	Ana	Carmen	All Children N=6
Proficiency Level	5	5	5	3	2	1	
Total number of Questions	16	132	133	61	2	0	344
Percent Use of Each Type of Question per Child and for Total Population in the Classroom							
Requests for Information	0	59.2	47.8	33.3	0	0	47.2
Requests for Clarification	0	4.1	5.8	25.6	0	0	10.1
Requests for Permission	0	2.0	2.9	0	0	0	1.9
Requests for Approval	0	4.1	8.7	10.3	0	0	7.5
Yes/No Questions	100	26.5	30.4	7.7	0	0	24.4
Requests for Action	0	0	4.4	17.9	0	0	6.3
Rhetorical Questions	0	0	0	5.2	0	0	1.3
Hesitation Questions	0	4.1	0	0	0	0	1.3
Percent Use of Each Type of Question per Child and for Total Population in Informal Settings							
Requests for Information	43.0	20.5	58.8	41.0	0	0	33.7
Requests for Clarification	7.0	4.8	20.6	32.0	0	0	12.3
Requests for Permission	0	0	0	9.0	0	0	1.2
Requests for Approval	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yes/No Questions	50.0	68.7	17.6	18.0	100.0	0	49.0
Requests for Action	0	4.8	3.0	0	0	0	3.2
Rhetorical Questions	0	1.2	0	0	0	0	.6
Hesitation Questions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4

Repertoire of Directives and Examples of Communicative Intentions and Their Meaning

Need Statements	Requests for action directed primarily to subordinates; e.g., I want to sweep the room; Oh man, I need a pencil!
Imperatives	Requests for action directed to familiar peers or subordinates; e.g., Stop, she is listening; Vete para allá.
Imbedded Imperatives	Requests for action directed often to unfamiliar people or people of higher rank. These are usually used with titles, address terms, postponed tags like OK and could you, and mitigated forms such as "please"; e.g., Would you put the cards in that?; No te los comas todavía Luci, okay? (Don't start eating that yet, Lucy, okay?)
Permission Directives	Requests for action directed primarily to people of a higher rank in formal situations; e.g., May I see that book? Peudo ver eso? (May I see that?)
Question Directives	Requests for action in which often the agent of the speech act is omitted, so that misunderstanding is possible because the resulting form is the same as an information question; e.g., Do you have the time?
Hints	Requests for action which require inference. Speakers must share rules in structured situations, and an understanding of habits and motives in less structured settings; e.g., I don't understand this; Hay que limpiar. (We have to clean.)

Table 5

Use of Directives

A. Number of Directives per Language Used by Each Child in Each Setting

Child:	Paula		Ana		Carmen		José		Juanita		César		Total-Across All Children	
Language (E = English, S = Spanish):	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S
Proficiency Level	5	5	5	2	5	1	3	3	2	5	1	5		
Formal Setting	34	13	32	0	21	0	3	13	1	2	2	11	93	39
Informal Setting	21	15	13	1	40	1	7	7	32	231	3	14	116	269
Total (% per language)	65.8	34.2	97.8	2.2	98.4	2.6	33.3	66.7	12.4	87.6	16.0	83.3	41.1	58.9

B. Per Cent of Directives per Type Used by Each Child in the Classroom

Child:	Paula		Ana		Carmen		José		Juanita		César		Total-Across All Children	
Language (E = English, S = Spanish):	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S
Need Statements	8.8		25.0	-	9.5	-				-	-	-	13.9	-
Imperatives	61.7	92.3	50.0	-	76.2	-	100	76.9	100	100	100	27.3	63.4	69.2
Imbedded Imperatives	29.4	7.6	12.5	-	9.5	-		15.3			-	63.6	17.2	25.6
Permission Directives	-		6.2	-		-		-			-	-	2.1	-
Question Directives	-		-	-		-		7.8			-	-	-	2.5
Hints	-		6.2		4.8	-						9.1	3.2	2.5

C. Percent of Directives per Type Used by Each Child in Informal Settings

Child:	Paula		Ana		Carmen		José		Juanita		César		Total-Across All Children	
Language (E = English, S = Spanish):	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S
Need Statements	-	-	-	-	5.0	-	-	-	-	.4	-	-	1.7	0.3
Imperatives	85	80	77.0	-	77.5	-	100	100	87.5	73.2	100	100	83.5	74.9
Imbedded Imperatives	10	-	15.4	100	15.0	100	-	-	9.3	23.4	-	-	11.3	21.6
Permission Directives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Question Directives	5	20	7.6	-	2.5	-	-	-	-	1.7	-	-	1.7	1.9
Hints	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.1	1.3	-	-	1.7	1.1